

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 005889 POSS DUPE
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UNCLAS STATE 005889

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: WMO, TPHY

SUBJECT: BALLOON FLIGHTS

1. THE U.S. NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IS PLANNING A SMALL ONE-TIME RESEARCH BALLOON TEST FROM CHRISTMAS ISLAND, AUSTRALIA IN SUPPORT OF A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENT IN 1979. THIS EXPERIMENT, CALLED THE FIRST GARP GLOBAL EXPERIMENT (FGGE) WILL ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE A DATA BASE FOR LONG-TERM PREDICTION OF GLOBAL WEATHER. THE PURPOSE OF THE BALLOON TEST FROM CHRISTMAS ISLAND IS TO DETERMINE THIS ISLAND'S SUITABILITY AS A POSSIBLE LAUNCH SITE FOR FGGE.

2. APPROXIMATELY 3 OR 4 BALLOONS MUST BE LAUNCHED IN THE JANUARY OR FEBRUARY TIME FRAME TO GIVE AN INDICATION OF WIND PATTERNS FROM CHRISTMAS FOR THE FINAL EXPERIMENT.

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THE BALLOONS ARE SIMILAR TO THE GHOST BALLOONS WHICH THE U.S. HAS FLOWN FROM CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND SINCE THE EARLY 1970'S. THEY ARE APPROXIMATELY FOUR METERS IN DIAMETER AND HAVE A THOUSAND GRAM INSTRUMENT PACKAGE. THEY WILL STAY ALOFT FOR APPROXIMATELY 4 OR 5 DAYS AT WHICH TIME AN AUTOMATIC CUT-DOWN SYSTEM FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION WILL ACTIVATE. THE BALLOONS WILL MEET ALL

EXISTING FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION SPECIFICATIONS FOR
UNMANNED RESEARCH BALLOONS (FAR 101).

3. REQUEST YOU OBTAIN CLEARANCE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FOR LAUNCHING BALLOONS FROM CHRISTMAS ISLAND. ALSO, PROVIDE YOUR SUPPORT FOR ANY CUSTOMS ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARY. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN MADE WITH THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY, CONTACT DR. JOHN ZILLMAN, TELEPHONE AREA CODE 03-662-0311. ALSO, BASED ON OUR PROJECTED WIND TRAJECTORIES, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR BALLOONS TO OVERFLY AUSTRALIA. REQUEST YOU SECURE OVERFLIGHT PERMISSION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. FLIGHT ALTITUDE DURING OVERFLIGHT WILL BE 47,000 FEET. THIS IS ABOVE ALL SUBSONIC COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT TRAFFIC AND BELOW SUPERSONIC FLIGHT LEVELS. BALLOON IS STRICTLY FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, CARRIED OUT UNDER CONTRACT TO THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH IN BOULDER, COLORADO, AND CARRIES ONLY EQUIPMENT FOR DETERMINING BALLOON POSITION AND A TIMER FOR AUTOMATIC CUT-DOWN.

ROBINSON

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Subject: BALLOON FLIGHTS

TAGS: TPHY, OCLR, US, AS, WMO

To: SYDNEY

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